

# THE Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION SINCE 1877

## BRIEFS

### CHRISTIAN STUDENT ARRESTED IN CUBA

SANTA CLARA, Cuba (BP) — American religious liberty leaders are interceding on behalf of Felix Yuriel Llerena López, 20, arrested April 27 by Cuban authorities because of his work to expose Christian persecution there. The college student was detained just a day after the United States Commission on International Religious Freedom (USCIRF) released its 2017 annual report naming Cuba, for the 14th consecutive year, as a Tier 2 country, the USCIRF category that falls just short of countries described as the world's most severe violators of religious liberty such as Iran and Sudan.

### TENN. LATEST STATE WITH VIABILITY LAW

NASHVILLE (BP) — The Tennessee Legislature has approved a ban on post-viability abortions, with the House of Representatives voting 69-18 in favor of the Tennessee Infants Protection Act on May 3, two days after the Senate passed the legislation in a 27-3 vote. The bill will go to Gov. Bill Haslam, who is considered pro-life but has not yet announced whether he will sign the legislation into law. An Ohio law enacted in 2011 provided the model for Tennessee's proposal and has not been challenged in court, according to the National Right to Life Committee in Washington, D.C.

### KY. CLERK BACK IN LEGAL CROSSHAIRS

CINCINNATI (BP) — A federal appeals court has reinstated a homosexual couple's lawsuit seeking damages from Kentucky county clerk Kim Davis, who refused to issue the couple a marriage license because of her religion. Davis spent five days in jail when she refused reportedly to issue a marriage license to David Erhold and David Moore, days after the U.S. Supreme Court legalized gay marriage across the nation in June 2015. Davis is committed to fighting the case. Matthew Staver, her attorney through the nonprofit Liberty Counsel of Orlando, FL, told Baptist Press.

## Youth Night: Check date, start time

### Event planned as an encouraging summer kickoff

By William H. Perkins Jr.  
Editor

Mississippi Baptist Youth Night enthusiasts should be sure they've got the right date and time for the 2017 version of the largest gathering annually of the state's Baptists — or they may find themselves in the cavernous Mississippi Coliseum in Jackson all by themselves.

Don Lum, Youth Night coordinator and evangelism director for the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board (MBCB) in Jackson, said the date of the event was moved up to June 2 this year to "jumpstart" the summer of missions activities, camps, Vacation Bible Schools, and other events on young people's calendars.

"For years, Youth Night was scheduled to provide a great closing event toward the end of an eventful summer as everyone was coming back from mission trips and camps and so on and returning to a normal schedule. This year, the Youth Night planning committee decided to kick off the summer with Youth Night as a night of encouragement to send out our young people who are going to be engaged in Christian summer activities," Lum said.

Featured speaker is Brian Mills, college pastor at multi-campus Cross Church in northwestern Arkansas. Ronnie Floyd, senior pastor at Cross Church, is a former two-term president of the Southern Baptist Convention. The church is headquartered in Springdale.

Mills is a 2001 graduate of Ouachita Baptist University in Arkadelphia, Ar., and

see YOUTH on p. 9

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# TELL SOMEONE



BRIAN MILLS



JOSH WAZE BAND

## Islamists release kidnapped girls



**GOING HOME** — A group of 82 freed Chibok schoolgirls met with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari after their release by Muslim terrorists who kidnapped them in April 2014. Nigeria released five Boko Haram leaders from prison in exchange for the girls, an official said. (BP photo/Twitter)

**ABUJA, Nigeria (BP and local reports)** — A group of 82 Chibok schoolgirls freed after more than three years of Islamic extremist captivity met with Nigerian President Muhammadu Buhari May 7 in Abuja, a day after their release in a prisoner swap.

Nigeria had released five Boko Haram terrorists being held in prison in exchange for the girls, a government official told the Associated Press May 7 on condition of anonymity. The government did not officially disclose the number of released terrorists.

Approximately 113 of the girls from the majority Christian town in northeastern Nigeria remain missing, their health and whereabouts uncertain. An estimated 95% of the girls involved in the kidnapping are Christians.

Intelligence reports describe the girls as having been subjected to forcible conversion to Islam, physical and sexual abuse, and being given away as rewards to terrorists

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## From the editor

WILLIAM PERKINS

### Our cousin Ida

Humankind, meet your kin — a lemur-like creature about the size of a small housecat. Yes, we are told, scientists are convinced this 47-million-year-old fossil, discovered in Germany in 1983 by an unknown private collector and affectionately named Ida, is indeed the much-sought "missing link" that neatly wraps up the evolutionary trail to man as we know him today.

Paleontologist Jorn Hurum of the Natural History Museum in Oslo, told National Geographic News that Ida bridges the evolutionary split between higher primates such as monkeys, apes, and humans, and their more distant relatives such as lemurs. "This is the first link to all humans," he said, "the closest thing we can get to a direct ancestor."

"This specimen looks like a really early fossil monkey that belongs to the group that includes us," Brian Richmond, a biological anthropologist at George Washington University in Washington, D.C., told National Geographic News.

"This little creature is going to show us our connection with the rest of all the mammals: with cows and sheep, and elephants and antelopes," said British naturalist Sir David Attenborough in an article in The Guardian newspaper of London. "The more you look at Ida, the more you can see, as it were, the primate in embryo."

On what are these scientists basing their conclusions? Well, Ida has a small bone near her beak (the talus) that resembles the bone of the same name in higher primates, and its toes have nails instead of claws. Her arms and legs are short like humans, and her face somewhat resembles a human face. Lastly, she has forward-looking eyes that would have given her the ability to judge distance.

That's it. Apparently, those are the main points that tie Ida to you and me. Combined with the fact that Ida was unearthed more than 30 years ago, the sketchy comparisons to humans are causing thoughtful people to ask questions.

Nothing about this fossil indicates that it was a human ancestor. Rather, it is a remarkably well-preserved, lemur-like creature looking nothing like an "ape-man." Ken Ham, president of the apologetics ministry Answers in Genesis, told Baptist Press at the time.



"Besides, why would a fossil found 25 years ago (now 34 years ago) suddenly become a media sensation? Only because of a major PR push by the financial backers of a new book and television documentary about the fossil," Ham said. "Yet even the peer reviewers of the scientific paper on the fossil asked that the human origins hype be removed."

In other words, forget the facts because Ida has real financial potential. That's the primary reason she has become such a hit after all those years of obscurity. Hurum, the Oslo paleontologist who purchased Ida for his museum, has written a book and was involved at the time with documentaries on Ida.

"You need an icon or two in a museum to drag people in," Hurum told the Guardian. "This is our Mona Lisa and it will be our Mona Lisa for the next 100 years."

Philip Gingerich, a University of Michigan paleontologist who was a member of the Ida research team, when asked by the Wall Street Journal at the time why the conclusions on Ida were not presented through the proper scientific channels, said, "There was a TV company involved and time pressure. We've been pushed to finish the study; it's not how I like to do science."

Sorry, guys. Nice try. Ida may have been a cute little thing, but she's nothing more than the artifice of a modern marketing scheme.

Why can't we just stick to the idea that we are wonderfully made by our sovereign Creator, just as the Bible records? That sounds a lot better, and happens to be the truth.



**CARPENTER FAMILY** — Kim Carpenter poses with her family: husband Brad and daughters Ava, age six, and Carys, age nine. (BR special photo)

## What You Did For Me

My name is Kim Carpenter and this is my story. I tell both my girls how blessed they are to have a mom and dad — a mom who is always there for them and a dad who takes care of them. That was not my life when I was their age. I had never experienced a loving, Christian home until the day I came to The Baptist Children's Village (BCV).

I came to The BCV when I was seven years old and stayed until I graduated as valedictorian of my class at Water Valley High School. Gifts like yours helped me secure a sponsor and scholarship, so that I could pursue my bachelor's and master's degrees in accounting at Mississippi College.

I worked for 16 years in corporate accounting before becoming a full-time mom. Brad and I met at work and have now been married 10 years. My family means everything. Because of my experience at The BCV, I understand how important family is and what a blessing God has given me.

When my first child was born, I wanted everything for her that I didn't have for myself. Not material things, but the daily love of a mother and a father for the rest of her life. I am so grateful for the gifts that allowed me to grow up in a Christian home at The Baptist Children's Village. Now, I want to give my girls that same experience.

In addition to the daily devotionals, my house parents took me and the other BCV children to church every Wednesday and Sunday. It was one of those Sunday mornings at First Church in Jackson when I surrendered my life to Christ. I was later baptized at First Church in Water Valley, and will always be thankful for the role The BCV played.

I know that changing one child's life at The Baptist Children's Village can change generations. The reason I strongly believe that is... I am that one child. The Baptist Children's Village

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# Wallace papers acquired by Southwestern

**FORT WORTH, Texas (BP)** — Southern Baptist medical missionary and martyr Bill Wallace suffered profoundly in his last weeks on earth, but he let it be known he had long been prepared.

"There is no sacrifice in all the world too great for a man to make for the Lord Jesus Christ," he wrote in an emotional letter shared with his home congregation just before he left to begin his fateful mission to China in 1935.

Now, Wallace's farewell message and many other papers from his life will be on display in Southwestern Seminary's new Mathena Hall along with his previously acquired portrait.

"The Bill Wallace collection represents the outstanding devotion and effort by the members of the Wallace Memorial Baptist Church of Knoxville, Tn.," said Craig Kubic, Southwestern's dean of libraries who requested a permanent loan of Wallace's papers including the historic letter.

The church has collected and preserved "a genuine tribute to the legacy of one of the SBC's most notable missionary doctors who was martyred in China," Kubic said.

Wallace's zeal for foreign ministry puzzled many. "You may ask, why do I want to go to China, that heathen nation, and there spend my life and energy," he wrote to his congregation in his legendary letter. "You might say there is much to be done in this country, and many have said you can do a lot of good here."

"Why should I go when there are such hardships and inconveniences? The only answer I have is that it is God's plan that I go."

The lengthy letter in Wallace's handwriting will also be digitized and available online through Southwestern's J.T. and Zelma Luther Archive.



"Why should I go when there are such hardships and inconveniences? The only answer I have is that it is God's plan that I go."

**Bill Wallace**

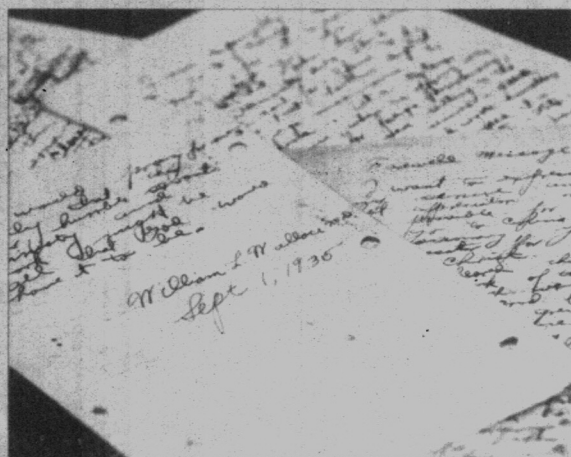
medical missionary and martyr

Wallace was a dedicated surgeon with a heart for spreading the Gospel, and his life story is familiar to generations of Southern Baptists. Born in Knoxville in 1908, Wallace completed medical school and a surgical residency, all aimed at being called as a medical missionary.

In 1935, the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board (now the International Mis-

sion Board) assigned Wallace to Wuchow (now Wuzhou) in southern China to work as a surgeon at the Baptist-operated Stout Memorial Hospital.

On receiving his mission, he delivered his heartfelt testimony to Broadway Church in Knoxville, his home church. Bags already packed, he immediately walked from the church to the train station with fellow church members accompany-



**MARTYRED** — American missionary surgeon Bill Wallace set forth his call to China in a letter to his home church in Knoxville, Tn. Wallace was martyred in 1951 while under communist Chinese imprisonment, and many members of succeeding generations of American Christians are familiar with his life story. (Southwestern Seminary photo)

ing him and stepped onto a train to begin his journey into Christian history.

In China, Wallace worked through World War II Japanese bombing raids and many privations but in 1950, the start of the Korean War initiated an intense anti-American propaganda campaign and missionaries were no longer welcome.

His arrest on spying charges came that December. Imprisonment included severe torture by the communist government, and he died on Feb. 10, 1951. His captors never disclosed the details of Wallace's death, but his broken body betrayed the inhuman treatment inflicted at their hands.

In 2015, Mike Boyd, senior pastor of Wallace Memorial Church in Knoxville and a member of Southwestern Seminary's board of trustees, acquired Wallace's portrait from

alma mater, the University of Tennessee College of Medicine in Memphis.

When Boyd learned that a room at Mathena Hall, which will house the Roy Fish School of Evangelism and Missions and Scarborough College, would bear Wallace's name, he and the church knew that Southwestern Seminary should house the portrait.

This year, Kubic arranged the permanent loan of Wallace's papers to be on display with the portrait.

Wallace never questioned his call to China. In his unforgettable farewell letter to his church, he wrote: "God's call was so definite to me, and I think He made it definite so there would be no doubt in my mind as to God's plan, so that through the long years of preparation there would be no doubt that I was doing God's will."

## Texas church to restart CP contributions

**PLANO, Texas (BP and local reports)** — Prestonwood Church will resume giving through the Cooperative Program (CP) after two months of evaluating its support of Southern Baptist missions and ministries.

"After a time of prayerful evaluation, Prestonwood is renewing our commitment to Southern Baptist missions by giving to the Cooperative Program without designation," executive pastor Mike Buster told Baptist Press in a statement.

For more than 40 years, Prestonwood has been a steady

fast supporter of the Cooperative Program and its mission to advance the Gospel through this vital giving program. We are grateful for the Southern Baptist Convention and our longtime ministry partnership and look forward to fulfilling the Great Commission together in the days ahead," Buster said.

No report explaining the church's findings was released along with the announcement.

Prestonwood Church said in mid-February it would escrow CP funds because of "various significant positions taken by the leadership of the [Southern



**GRAHAM MOORE**

Baptist] Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission," headquartered in Nashville.

In a December 2016 interview with The Wall Street Journal newspaper, Prestonwood Church senior pastor

Jack Graham, president of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 2002-2003, alleged "disrespectfulness" by Ethics and Religious Liberty Commission (ERLC) president Russell Moore toward evangelical supporters of Donald Trump during the 2016 presidential campaign.

Graham currently serves on Trump's Religious Advisory Council.

The congregation said that during the escrow period, it would evaluate how to proceed with future financial support of the SBC and state conven-

tion ministries. Prestonwood Church is dually aligned with the Baptist General Convention of Texas and the more conservative Southern Baptists of Texas convention.

In February, the SBC Executive Committee's CP Committee voted to create an ad hoc committee to "study and recommend redemptive solutions to the current reality in Southern Baptist life of churches' either escrowing or discontinuing Cooperative Program funds, with the report being brought back to the September 2017 Executive Committee meeting."

Years ago there used to be a weatherman up in northeast Mississippi who would, from time to time talk about an "OGNIB." This was just a quirky way of the weatherman talking about the forecast he had given the day before that he had gotten right. Since it was the previous day's forecast and then history, he took the word "BINGO" and spelled it backwards and said he had gotten an OGNIB. What that meant was he had forecast rain and it came, or the right temperature, or some other meteorological event, and he got it. It was an OGNIB.

A weather forecast is not perfect, exact science — a little shift of wind or timing can change when and what's going to happen or maybe it just evaporates before it gets there — so on the days when it all came together as he anticipated, it was worthy of a celebration with an OGNIB.

As we approach Mother's Day and celebrate family and mom and the good things that have come into our lives because of those relationships, I want to ask you to join me in pausing and looking back over our shoulder at what possibly could be called the OGNIBs of family or, pointedly, the OGNIBs for deserving moms or dads as they raise their children.

While we want to be good parents and try to put in place the right things to achieve success in parenting and childrearing, it is usually a lifetime later — and it could well be even past our lifetimes — when the full-bloom picture comes into focus of what our efforts achieved. Still, there are some markers along the way that would be worthy of noting if they lead us to say, "That was an OGNIB." Let me give you three things to think about as you look at your children and your parenting. Maybe you can chalk up an OGNIB or two and give thanks for God's grace and His work in your life. Now, let me say at the outset that all a parent does may be



## The 'OGNIBs' of Life

insufficient to give direction to a rebellious son or daughter who is determined to go in wrong ways all the days of their lives. You can't make kids grow up to fit every form you put before them and around them but overall, looking back over the experience, there are in part or at times wonderful, whole expressions of an OGNIB.

The first thing to think about is respect. As you are day-to-day raising little Johnny or Sally, respect ingrained in the mind and heart of a child is an incredible thing that will make a difference across entire lives. In the Ten Commandments when the Bible says, "Honor thy father and thy mother," it is not just a command to children. It is also an implied need in the life of mom and dad. Honor is something you are and do that deserves honor. When children are supposed to honor and as a result obey, there needs to be something in the parents that can be seen, loved, and ultimately appreciated. If respect for one another and for parents is not nurtured and instructed and called for, it is very likely that other authority figures will not be respected: teachers, coaches,

law enforcement, our leaders. As a child moves through the phases of life, he or she finds themselves bumping into those people who are in place over them only to kick and scream and blame and criticize and not show honor and respect for them. As you set out to teach your children at a very young age, it is important they learn respectful speech to those people who are in place over them and not encourage them to be disrespectful. It is important to model that for them as well as instruct them and help them to see that a life of respect for those around you and above you and authority is a good thing. I have known of people who have been so disrespectful to others and have such disdain for those folks who are serving in places of leadership, and yet they wonder why their children grow up getting in trouble with all the authority figures in their lives. Parents who instill a respectful spirit — that willingness to try to do the right thing and be the right kind of person with the right kind of attitude — probably deserve an OGNIB. Respectfulness doesn't just apply to two- or three- or four-year-olds. It fits into the whole scheme of life and makes

a difference. You have helped provide a foundation of respect.

A second area of consideration is reverence. This particularly has to do with being a part of God's people and attending worship services and having meaningful religious experiences in Christ. I grew up hearing the Word treated reverently and being taught we were to show reverence toward spiritual things, which I interpreted from what I was being told as: shut up because the organ has started playing. We are to be reverent. Reverence has to do not just with the sounds around us but looking to the Savior who is above us. The truest, ultimate experience of being reverent is to come to the moments where you are in a place before God and you have a meeting with Him. That should be the ultimate goal for every worship experience and every meaningful Bible study, that we come in contact with the Lord. If you have taught your child that to be in church and worship is an experience to come to a new meeting with Christ every time, you deserve an OGNIB.

One final thought has to do with reproduction. It's one thing for a child to be a recipient of good parenting, but it must be reproduced in them. Reproduction is a vital part of a person's life. To be the recipient of good things is wonderful. To reproduce those things in the next generation and the next is vital in the kingdom of God, community, and culture. A child who grows up knowing Jesus and sharing Jesus with those around him or her and providing an opportunity for others to come to know Christ, that reproduction is missions in action from the home to the ends of the earth — and to what degree you have instilled that within your children and in your family, you deserve an OGNIB.

Happy Mother's Day!

The author can be contacted at [directions@mbcb.org](mailto:directions@mbcb.org).

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### 11 Reasons to Not Drink Alcohol

1. God said to be sober (1 Thessalonians 5:6-8; 1 Peter 5:8).
2. We are to love God with all our minds (Mark 12:30). Alcohol impairs that mind.
3. It is expensive (Proverbs 23:21).
4. It makes you do foolish things you would never do in your right mind (Proverbs 23:29-35).
5. It is dangerous and addictive (Proverbs 20:1).
6. It hurts your testimony; you influence others to drink; you often harm others (Romans 14:21).
7. Drugs should not be used for recreation and pleasure.
8. Never take that first drink, and you will never become a problem drinker.
9. Drinking supports an industry that has destroyed untold thousands.
10. Not drinking is prudent and wise (Proverbs 20:1; 22:3).
11. You should rely on God, not drugs (Psalm 11:1).

-David R. Brumelow, author of *Ancient Wine and the Bible: The Case for Abstinence*. [gulfcoastpastor.blogspot.com](http://gulfcoastpastor.blogspot.com) (Permission granted to reprint.)

Got questions about the Bible and Alcohol? Find answers in "Ancient Wine and the Bible."





Developing leadership is the key to success in any enterprise. The military demonstrates this principle well with the academies and officer training. Mississippi Baptists and Southern Baptists at large have benefitted from our three colleges and six seminaries. We understand that a sharp axe cuts more wood with less effort than a dull axe.

Delegation without discipleship leads to disaster. We need Godly leaders with a Biblical World View. We need leaders who are statesmen first, politicians second or maybe third. We must be intentional and proactive in developing young men and women who will serve in public life.

The early church in Acts 6 was looking for public servants who were wise, spiritual, and honest. We need more elected officials who have these three qualities. We need leaders who have integrity and

character — but it won't happen by accident.

Wherefore, we are excited to announce to you the first CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE (CLI)—the first of many. This inaugural Christian Leadership Institute will be conducted in 2018 at Blue Mountain College on Monday through Friday, July 9-13. Seventy young men (high school age) will be invited from across our state to come experience a week of encouragement, equipping, and education in public service.

Iron sharpens iron. We will have fun and games; we will have recreation — these 70 are teenagers — but we will invite senators, representatives, judges,

es, preachers, military officers, first responders, and educators to come challenge these young men to "shoot for the stars."

Registration will begin at 1:00 Monday afternoon and checkout will be after lunch on Friday. We are asking that each local association nominate a high school age young man for this Institute and provide or seek out a scholarship of \$250 for room, board, and activities during the CLI. There would be a few extra slots for associations with multiple counties on a first come, first serve basis. A second CLI is in the planning for high school young ladies.

After Jesus sent out the 12, he sent forth the 70 (Luke 10:1 KJV) to preach, teach,

and heal. We hope to inspire and motivate these 70 to lead, guide, and serve — to fulfill their civic responsibility. Christian leaders make for good "civil servants." What if a future governor, legislator, or judge were a graduate of our Christian Leadership Institute?

The CLI is new — it is a work in progress. We welcome your questions, suggestions, and comments. We are eager to explain how your association can participate.

We request that you join us in prayer for this endeavor. II Timothy 2:2 says, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach

others also." (KJV) What an opportunity to offer a difference in a young man's life — or better yet, to offer a difference in our state.

We are AVAILABLE to come to your association, BSU, church, or any group (men/women's rally, youth camp) to preach (revival, Bible conference), teach (Malachi, I Peter), or give a Christian Action Commission report. We work "OUT of the Baptist Building," not just "IN the Baptist Building." Please call, text, or email if we can help.

Be in prayer for the special called session of the Legislature beginning June 5th.

Don't curse the darkness... Light a candle!

Digby is executive director-treasurer of the Christian Action Commission. He can be reached at (601) 292-3329/office, (662) 284-9163/cell, or by e-mail at [kdigby@christianaction.com](mailto:kdigby@christianaction.com).

## Christian Leadership Institute

### BIBL i O C i P H E R

GI OLV LQWF BZEV AQFOL AGIJVFH

QA Z EZI'H LZIC, ZIC MFQOV QKVF

ZJZGIHO OLV BZICXVHOGBP WDQI

OLV DXZGHOVF QA OLV MZXX QA OLV

PGIJ'H DZXZBV; ZIC OLV PGIJ HZM

OLV DZFO QA OLV LZIC OLZO MFQOV.

CZIGVX AGKV: AGKV

Clue: B = C

Have fun with cryptography and exercise your Bible knowledge. A King James Version Bible verse has been encoded by letter substitution. The same letter is substituted throughout the puzzle. Solve by trial and error. Answer to last week's puzzle: Mark 6:56

By Charles Marx, 1932-2004, © 2005

### Staff Changes



NEW LIFE CHURCH, FLORENCE, has called Janna Whitehead as worship leader. She is shown with pastor Scotty Smith.



GAMORY ROAD CHURCH, GREENVILLE, has called Frank Terry as interim pastor, shown with his wife, Vickie.

### College News

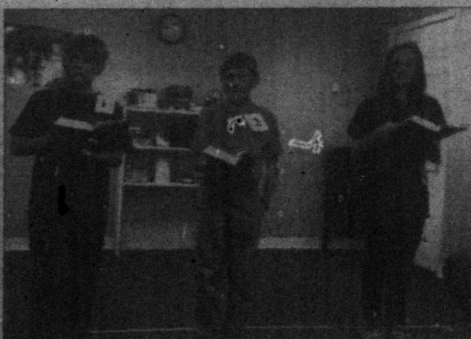


The alumni and friends of CLARKE COLLEGE have established a scholarship at BLUE MOUNTAIN COLLEGE. The Clarke Memorial College Scholarship will be awarded to deserving students on the basis of good scholarship, fine character, and the need for financial assistance with preference given to students whose parent(s) is currently serving in Christian ministry, primarily in small churches, with first priority to the descendant of an individual who attended Clarke (Memorial) College. Pictured are Clarke alumni (front row, l to r) Evelyn Carpenter Williams, Dianne Nelson, Lin Skelton Bagwell, and Donna Conaway Click; (back row, l to r) Walter Scott Jr., James Reed, David Goode and Terry Newman

## Bible Drills



**SILVER CREEK CHURCH, PIKE ASSOCIATION,** recognizes its children and youth participating in the associational drill.



**PLEASANT HILL CHURCH, COLUMBUS,** recognizes drillers Travis Manchester, Noah Honeycutt, and Bella Bounds, who all advanced to the associational drills.



**FIRST CHURCH, TUPELO,** recognizes drillers Benjamin Russell, Colleen Leckie, Scarlett Leckie, Mary Esther Leckie, and Benjamin Moors. Matt Powell, pastor.



**CHESTER CHURCH, ACKERMAN,** recognizes its Bible drillers.



**GUM GROVE CHURCH, BROOKHAVEN,** recognizes its youth and children drillers. Benji Pyeatt, pastor; Bible drill leaders, Lissy Smith, Greta Stogner, Rita Goss, and Takisha Whittington.



**CENTER CHURCH, ATTALA COUNTY,** recognizes its Bible drillers.



**FIRST CHURCH, PONTOTOC,** recognizes its student Bible drill participants: Justin Cobb (youth minister), Maddy Angle, Oliver Gibbs, and Eden Bowen.



**OAKHURST CHURCH, CLARKSDALE,** recognizes its state youth and children drillers: Walker Starnes, Carter Weaver, Mackenzie Lee, Justin Elliott, Warner Lively, Jacob Seely, and Rachel Thornton.



**HARMONY CHURCH, WINSTON ASSOCIATION,** recognizes its Bible drillers at the state drill in Meridian.



**MID-DELTA ASSOCIATION** held its drills on Apr. 6 at Drew Church. Shown are children and youth from Calvary Church, Cleveland; Immanuel, Cleveland; First Church, Cleveland; First Church, Indianola; and Yale Street.



## Bible Drills



**HICKORY CHURCH, HICKORY**, recognizes its drillers. Front row, MacHenry Morgan, Hunter Morgan, Marilyn Tullis, and Josie Tullis; back row, Zach McMullen, Matthew Brand, Garrett Mills, and Conner Boggart.



**CENTRAL CHURCH, MCNEILL**, recognizes drillers Joshua Kennedy, Lana Bagley, Zack Kennedy, Peyton Samson, Samantha Kennedy, and Blake Russell.



**CENTER CHURCH, BLUE SPRINGS**, recognizes its youth drillers - Jake Wood, Katie Wallace, and Sarah Beth Black.

## Just for the Record



The 3rd and 4th grade GA's at **WEST HEIGHTS CHURCH, PONTOTOC**, celebrated Lottie Moon by baking cookies from a recipe in GA World magazine. Chloe Malone baked cookies for everyone in the class. Tammy Shelton and Anita Bailey, GA leaders. David Hamilton, pastor.



Sean Wilkinson was licensed to the gospel ministry Apr. 30 by **NEW LIFE CHURCH, FLORENCE**. He is shown with pastor Scotty Smith, right.



**GILLSBURG CHURCH, GILLSBURG**, honored Charles and Linda Carruth for their years of dedicated service after Charles retired as the church's music director.



**GLENDALE CHURCH, LELAND**, held a commissioning service for its new deacons. Shown are pastor Kevin Franklin, Danny Turnage (Vickie), Frank Terry (Vickie), and Bruce Silk (Ewella).



### In other Church News:

► **First Church, Eupora**, will host Gold City Quartet in concert May 19, 7 p.m. Love offering.

**WHITESAND CHURCH, JEFFERSON DAVIS COUNTY**, honored their pastor of 14 years, Charles R. Burnham, with a reception to commemorate his 50th year in ministry. He is shown with his wife, Dot, who was the church clerk at Union Church, Rankin Co., who signed his ministry license 50 years ago.



**GRANDVIEW CHURCH, PEARL**, recently celebrated Western Day with its senior adults.



Members of **GRIFFITH MEMORIAL CHURCH, JACKSON**, gathered around a flowered cross Easter morning for their benediction. Each Sunday School class decorated the cross as a group.

# DNC chair issues controversial edict on abortion stance

NASHVILLE (BP and local reports) — Pushback from pro-life Democrats and others continues some two weeks after Democratic National Committee (DNC) chairman Tom Perez said "every Democrat" should support abortion as one of the party's "fundamental values."

Pro-life U.S. Rep. Daniel Lipinski (D-IL) told WORLD Radio May 2, "With the Democratic Party right now at probably our lowest point in about nine decades" in terms of the number of state and federal offices held, "it certainly is not the time to be pushing anyone outside the party or suggesting that they are not welcome."

Lipinski's remarks came in response to an April 21 statement by Perez that "every Democrat, like every American, should support a woman's right to make her own choices about her body and her health. That is not negotiable and should not change city by city or state by state."

Perez urged Democrats to "make sure our Democratic candidates and elected leaders are living up to these fundamental values."

Perez made his statement after the pro-choice group National Abortion Rights Action League (NARAL) slammed DNC leaders for supporting Heath Mello, a Democrat running for mayor of Omaha, Ne., who voted for pro-life bills as a state legislator.

Former presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, a U.S. Senator from Vermont who claims to be an Independent but caucuses with Democrats, and DNC deputy chair Keith Ellison, the first professing Muslim to hold that job, appeared at a rally in support of Mello April 20 as part of a "unity tour" organized by the DNC.

The current Democrat Party platform includes support of unfettered abortion access.

NARAL President Ilyse Hogue called DNC leaders' support of Mello "politically stupid," according to media reports.

Amid the controversy, Mello "quickly backtracked his pro-life position," LifeNews.com reported. The mayoral candidate said while he is "personally pro-life," he will "never do any-

thing to restrict access to reproductive health care."

Perez commended Mello's apparent change of mind on abortion policy April 22 and said "every candidate who runs as a Democrat" should support so-called abortion rights.

Sanders and U.S. House of Representatives minority leader Nancy Pelosi — both of whom support pro-abortion policies — insist there is room for pro-lifers in the Democratic Party. Pelosi is a Democrat from San Francisco.



PEREZ

"The truth is that in some conservative states, there will be candidates that are popular candidates who may not agree with me on every issue," Sanders told National Public Radio. "I understand it. That's what politics is about."

"If we are going to protect a woman's right to choose, at the end of the day we're going to need Democratic control over the House and the Senate, and state governments all over this nation," Sanders said, "and we have got to appreciate where people come from, and do our best to fight for the pro-choice agenda but I think you just can't exclude people who disagree with us on one issue."

Pelosi told NBC News that "of course" a pro-life candidate can receive DNC support. She added, "I have served many years in Congress with members who have not shared my very positive — my family would say 'aggressive' — position on promoting a woman's right to choose."

The number of Pelosi's pro-life colleagues, however, is decreasing. Democrats for Life of America in Fairfax, Va., an organization of pro-life Democrats, said in an April 20 statement there were 125 pro-life Democrats in the U.S. House of Representatives in 1978.

That number has reduced to just two "staunchly pro-life Democrats" in 2017, according to WORLD Radio, which called pro-life Democrats an "endangered species."

The decrease of pro-life Democrats has coincided with the party's loss of more than 1,000 state legislative seats as well as its loss of the White House and both houses of Congress, according to Democrats for Life.



**LIBERTIES REINSTATED** — U.S. President Donald Trump (seated) signs an executive order on May 4 to repeal the Johnson Amendment that prohibited non-profit organizations like churches from getting involved with political candidates, and to otherwise protect faith beliefs and practices. Representatives from a number of Christian and non-Christian faith organizations attended the signing ceremony. (BP screen capture from WhiteHouse.gov)

## Trump's executive order seen as restoring religious liberties

WASHINGTON, D.C. (BP) — Religious liberty advocates commended U.S. President Trump's new executive order to protect faith beliefs and practice, but some said it fell short of what is needed.

Trump's order, issued May 4 on the 2017 National Day of Prayer at a ceremony at the White House Rose Garden in Washington, D.C., states:

■ The administration's policy will be to enforce vigorously the "robust protections for religious freedom" in federal law.

■ The U.S. Department of Treasury, which includes the Internal Revenue Service, will not penalize a person, house of worship, or other religious organization for speaking "about moral or political issues from a religious perspective," thereby providing relief from a six-decade-old law known as the Johnson Amendment that prohibited non-profit organizations like churches from getting involved with political candidates.

■ The secretaries of three federal departments will consider revising rules to protect the freedom of conscience of religious objectors to the abortion/contraception mandate imposed by the Obama administration.

The executive order does not include protections for faith-based and other federal contractors who have established their employment practices on a biblical sexual ethic. Nor does it protect individuals and institutions from being penalized by the federal government for acting in support of their belief that marriage is only between a man and a woman.

Those types of protections were reportedly included in a draft executive order leaked to some news media in February.

Russell Moore, president of the Southern Baptist Ethics & Religious Liberty Commission in Nashville, said, "After years of open hostility toward religious institutions and conscience from the previous administration, this executive order is a welcome change in direction toward people of faith from the White House."

"Not only that, but many federal agencies are working already to ensure that the executive and administrative violations of religious freedom from the Obama administration are being rolled back."

"The symbolism of mentioning the Little Sisters of the Poor and similar groups [in the order] is also important and welcome," Moore said in written comments for Baptist Press (BP). "No one should conclude, of course, that this executive order solves the wide array of challenges we face on the religious freedom front."

"Much, much more must be done — especially in terms of congressional legislation — to ensure that American citizens are able to serve their communities without violating their religious convictions."

Frank S. Page, president of the Southern Baptist Convention Executive Committee in Nashville, said he was deeply grateful to Trump for keeping his word.

"He promised me that there would be a strong push for religious freedom protection," Page told BP in a written statement. "It is important for people to be able

to express themselves according to their faith. It's also extremely heartening to see that he wants to honor the conscience of believers who have serious moral concerns about participating in non-Christian activities."

Becket, which represents religious organizations that objected to the abortion/contraception mandate despite the threat of huge fines, applauded the order.

Former Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) President Jack Graham, senior pastor of Prestonwood Church in suburban Dallas, was among the religious leaders who prayed and stood behind Trump while he spoke and signed the order. Graham currently serves on Trump's Religious Advisory Panel.

The Johnson Amendment, named after then-Senator and future President Lyndon Johnson of Texas, altered the federal tax code in 1954 to bar 501(c)(3) organizations "from directly or indirectly participating in, or intervening in, any political campaign on behalf of (or in opposition to) any candidate for elective public office."

The amendment — and the way it has been wielded by liberal organizations especially — has caused confusion for many churches and pastors regarding what freedoms they have to address elections or even issues and the public policies affecting them.

Page said he will continue "to urge pastors to speak to issues that are clear scripturally. I will continue to do so as I preach God's Word, but I will not endorse any political candidate from the pulpit of any church."



## YOUTH

cont. from p.1

a 2011 graduate of Southeastern Seminary in Wake Forest, N.C.

Worship leader for 2017 Youth Night is the Josh Maze Band from Memphis. Jackson native Maze is creative/worship pastor at Highland Church in Memphis. He is the son of longtime Mississippi Baptist church planter and church staffer Gary Maze, currently associate pastor of Broadmoor Church in Madison.

Both Mills and the Josh Maze Band are new to Mississippi Baptist Youth Night.

Youth Night is a unique opportunity for students from all across Mississippi to come together for a night of celebration, worship, and challenges from leaders that God is using to impact this student generation with the call of God on their lives.

"We believe God has assembled a wonderful worship team and He will use this venue to touch lives for eternity," Lum said.

The 2017 MBCB theme, "Tell Someone, Tell Me," will be emphasized, Lum added.

The 2017 Mississippi Baptist Youth Night will begin at 6:30 p.m. on June 2 at Mississippi Coliseum, located off the High Street exit of Interstate 55 in Jackson. Doors will open at 5:15 p.m. There are no fees or registrations. Seating is first come, first served.

A time of invitation will be held at the close of Mills' message, and trained counselors will be available to pray with those making commitments to the Lord.

A love offering will be taken, dedicated to helping offset the cost of student-led mission trips and projects. For details on this program, contact Lum at one of the points listed below.

For more information, contact Lum at P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. Telephone (601) 292-3278 or toll-free outside Jackson (800) 748-1651, ext. 278. E-mail: dlum@mbcb.org.

Mississippi Baptist Youth Night is made possible by gifts to the Mississippi Cooperative Program.

## RELEASE

cont. from p.1

warring against the Nigerian government.

The swap marked the largest number of Chibok schoolgirls released since Boko Haram kidnapped a total of 276 of them from a government boarding school in April 2014. About 60 of the girls managed to escape on the night of their capture or in the ensuing years. Nigeria secured the release of 21 others in October 2016.

Buhari has pledged to continue working for the remaining girls' freedom.

Parents and relatives anxiously gathered at newsstands as the girls' names and photos were released, Associated Press reported.

"God is answering the prayers of His people," said pastor Filibus Madu, Chibok Local Council chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria. "We are grateful to God for answered prayers."

The entire Kibaki (Chibok) land and the parents are generally happy with this release. We are praying for the rest of the girls to be released."

"God is answering the prayers of His people. We are grateful to God for answered prayers... We are praying for the rest of the girls to be released"

Filibus Madu

Chibok Local Council chairman of the Christian Association of Nigeria

Boko Haram is suspected of having hidden the girls deep in the Sambisa forest for much of their captivity, and had threatened to enslave the girls.

"No human being should go through this kind of ordeal," Buhari said during the 45-minute meeting. "The security agencies and state governments should continue to provide special protection to educational institutions vulnerable to this kind of outrage especially in remote areas."

Buhari told the girls he would "personally supervise the performance of those entrusted with your welfare and commitments made by the Federal Government on your health, education, security and general well-being."

Physicians have already examined the girls who are with "those who will supervise

their rehabilitation," Buhari spokesman Femi Adesina told Al Jazeera television network.

Aisha Yesufu, who has campaigned for the girls' release as a member of the Bring Back Our Girls grassroots advocacy group, told Al Jazeera the freed girls need rehabilitation and trauma counseling.

"It's not just to bring them back home, we must ensure that they get the education they are supposed to have," Al Jazeera quoted Yesufu. "It is time for them to be reunited with their families."

Boko Haram has killed between 20,000 and 25,000 people since 2009, according to official estimates, and has displaced about 2.6 million others, creating humanitarian crises in the region that have been termed the gravest in the world.

## Submission Guidelines

The Baptist Record is pleased to publish news and photographs of special events that take place in cooperating churches of the Mississippi Baptist Convention. News items and/or photographs depicting benefits and activities for secular or outside organizations will not be published.

Preferred method: news may be submitted electronically to the e-mail address below, and must be included in the message segment of an e-mail form. Secondary method: news may be typewritten or neatly printed on 8 1/2 by 11-inch paper and mailed. All articles must be received in writing; no articles will be accepted over the telephone. Due to ever-present virus threats, no text attachments will be accepted. Photograph attachments in JPEG format are permissible.

Please make articles concise. Include the who, what, when, where details of the story, along with a contact person's address and telephone number.

Photographs must be submitted electronically via e-mail, as attachments in JPEG format. **Hard copy photographs mailed through the postal service will not be accepted.** Photographs must be clear, sharp, and well-lighted. Photographs must depict people. No landscape, building, or object-only photographs will be printed. Photographs containing inappropriate gestures and objectionable clothing will not be published. Cell phone photographs and other low resolution items that do not reproduce well on newsprint are generally not publishable.

There is no guarantee that news items and/or photographs will be published, and unsolicited material will not be acknowledged or returned. All news items are subject to editing, and all photographs are subject to cropping. News items and/or photographs can be published one time only. Deadline for submitting news is one week prior to requested publication date. Articles that are not date-sensitive will be published on a space-available basis. These guidelines are not meant to be exhaustive.

Submit news to The Baptist Record, P.O. Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205-0530. FAX: (601) 292-3330. E-mail: baptistrecord@mbcb.org.

## CARPENTER

cont. from p.2

changed my life forever because of loyal supporters like you. I want to pass that love and care along to my girls.

Now you know my story, a story of God's love and faithful supporters changing one little girl's life forever. Please continue your support of the young girls and boys at The

Baptist Children's Village. I can personally testify to the incredible impact your gift can have.

**Please give a gift today.** Mother's Day is just around the corner. You can honor your mother with a gift to The Baptist Children's Village.

As I love my girls and try to be the best mother possible, I am so thankful for the Christian foundation and lessons I learned at The Bap-

tist Children's Village. This Mother's Day, please continue helping children who need a loving, Christian home like I did.

God bless.

**Editor's note:** The 2017 Mother's Day Offering for the Baptist Children's Village will be observed on Sunday, May 14. For more information and promotional materials, visit [baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://baptistchildrensvillage.com).

## Truth is not relative.

Find it in the One who is the way, truth, and life.

Simply share the following prayer with God in your own words:

1. Lord, I admit that I need you. (I have sinned.)
2. I want forgiveness for my sins and freedom from eternal death. (I repent.)
3. I believe Jesus died and rose from the grave to forgive my sins and to restore my relationship with you. (I believe in Jesus.)
4. By faith, I invite Jesus Christ into my life.

From this time on, I want to live in a loving relationship with Him. (I receive Christ as my Savior and Lord.)

"But as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in his name." (John 1:12)

\* If you make a decision for Christ today, contact a local Southern Baptist church for spiritual guidance.



Kim Carpenter came to live at The Baptist Children's Village when she was seven years old and stayed until she graduated as valedictorian of her high school class. The Baptist Children's Village helped her secure a sponsor and scholarship so that she could pursue a bachelor's and master's degree in accounting at Mississippi College. She worked for 16 years in corporate accounting. These degrees are beneficial even today in allowing her to be a full-time mom and part-time accountant.

Kim says,



**THE  
BAPTIST  
CHILDREN'S  
VILLAGE**

*Mother's Day*  
**ANNUAL OFFERING**

She continues,

Kim Carpenter is so thankful for the influence of The Baptist Children's Village in her life. Because of that influence, her girls have a mom that will always be there for them, and the opportunity to live in a Christian home.

## MOTHER'S DAY • MAY 14, 2017

"When my first child was born, I knew I wanted everything for her that I did not have for myself—not material things, but the love of a mother and a father every day for the rest of her life." —KIM CARPENTER

Kim's husband Brad says about her,



### Order promotional materials for your church!

Fill out the form below and mail it to  
The Baptist Children's Village, P.O. Box 27, Clinton, MS 39060

Name/Church: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Bulletin Inserts

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Offering Envelopes

\_\_\_\_\_ # of Posters

Or order online at [www.baptistchildrensvillage.com](http://www.baptistchildrensvillage.com)

We are mobile! Text helpkids to 955-77, to get BGV updates and news. Get The BGV app available for Apple and Android devices.



## Loyal? • Matthew 26:63-75

As the soldiers, chief priests, elders, and Judas marched into the garden everything that Jesus had told his followers was about to come to fruition. There was utter chaos and nothing seemed to make sense. Jesus offered no resistance yet those who sought Him treated Him as if He were a dangerous criminal. The disciples, sleep still in their eyes, were confused about what they should do and so did nothing except for one who attacked with a sword adding to the chaos. Things began to progress quickly; Satan relished the thought that he had won.

Jesus was taken from the garden to the courtyard of the high priest, Caiaphas. Unnecessarily shackled, Jesus is interrogated about who He is and why He came. Both His silence and his words angered those out to get Him. They finally asked Him if he were the Christ and Jesus responded with a truthful "Yes." Finally! They had the proof to convict this imposter, and in a rage, Caiaphas tore his robes crying "blasphemy" and called for Jesus' death. This was the day the religious leaders had been waiting for. Jesus stood silent in the midst of the rant, perhaps glancing outside where another drama was taking place...one He had predicted only hours before.

Let's review: "Peter stated that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the Living God and is called Petra or the Rock; He rebukes Jesus moments later; "Peter states that he would never leave or desert Jesus, and would die for Him; Jesus tells him he will be sifted and will deny Him. "Jesus asks Peter to pray for strength but he sleeps. Peter has been the focus through these events but the next event changed his life forever.

All four gospels state "one of those with Jesus" took a sword and cut the ear off of the high priest's servant whose name was Malchus. Many scholars believe it was Peter. In Luke's version (Luke 22:50 ESV) we read Jesus' words to Peter after the attack, "No more of this!" Then we read, "Peter followed at a distance." (vs 55) We discussed last week that Peter's pride was his downfall. Today's lesson reveals the awful consequence of that pride.

May I take some license in how the events could have happened? (Be aware

these are merely my thoughts not biblical fact.) Peter had told Jesus several hours earlier that he would fight for and never desert Him. If Peter had cut the ear off could it be he was trying to prove his loyalty to Jesus? If Jesus looked straight at Peter and said, "No more of this," I imagine Peter's pride was hurt; he was after all merely doing what he said he would do. Maybe Satan began whispering into Peter's ear,

"Can you believe Jesus did that to you in front of everyone? All you were trying to help and Jesus embarrassed you." The

whispers got louder and Peter became more hurt and angry as he followed, at a distance. Yes, technically he was still "following" but anger and hurt churned in his heart. By the time Peter arrived at the high priest's courtyard, he was livid. When those came and identified him as one of Jesus' followers, Peter spoke out of this anger...three times and then heard the awful sound of the rooster crowing. Satan's sifting was

completed and as the enemy laughed, Peter separated himself from his beloved Jesus and wept bitterly.

This story affects me like no other for I can relate to Peter. I have let hurt and anger take over in my mind then do the unthinkable. I must remember Peter's denial did not surprise Jesus. Jesus had said to him: "But when you turn back, strengthen the brothers." (Luke 22:32b) Jesus was not finished with Peter but he needed sifting. Sifting, painful as it is, separates the good from the bad. Peter did "turn back" and days after Jesus' ascension, preached and 3,000 became believers. His life and words strengthened the brothers just as Jesus predicted. Peter became the Rock Jesus always knew he could be.

All of us have one time or another been less than loyal to Christ but it has never been a surprise to Him. The same enemy that whispered to Peter will whisper to us that we are now worthless but Jesus' call is always to turn back and become what He intended us to be.

Our lesson title today is, Loyal? Yes He is!

Grace is a Bible teacher, conference leader, and member of First Church, Clinton.



### Explore the Bible

with Cyndi Grace

## Life at Work • Colossians 3:22-25; 4:1

As a full-time minister of the Gospel for 28 years sometimes it has been difficult to separate my ministry from my identity. In my job, I preach so I am called preacher. I care for my people, so I am called pastor. Yet in Christ, we are so much more than our jobs and our careers. There are always crises that need your attention, sermons that need to be developed, a call to make, a visit. It's what pastors do. I love my calling and God's people. But there are times I have to remind myself, my identity is much more than my profession.

In Colossians Chapter 3 and on into Chapter 4, Paul reminds us that being rooted in Christ is where our identity begins and continues, never in or from our work. And when our work is done for God it becomes an act of worship. Therefore, the important thing is not so much in what you do, but whom you do it for.

Sometimes people struggle with feelings of inferiority because their profession or job is considered by culture as blue collar versus white collar. Some jobs do not require much education, but more physical strength and muscle. But that doesn't mean those working those jobs are ignorant or substandard. And it doesn't mean

white-collar workers are superior. God has strung us all differently and we all need to play our tune for the Lord.

A wise man once told my young teenage sons, "Any work that is honest is honorable." We had a lawn care business on the side and they seemed to be a bit embarrassed when their friends saw them out cutting yards. Culture had already begun influencing their thinking. They didn't want to be thought of by their peers as inferior.

It is interesting that Paul directs even those believers who were slaves to obey their human masters in Colossians

3:22. Now his instructions in no way meant he condoned one man owning another. But he challenged the theology of these believers and helped them to understand that their ultimate master was God. Thus he encouraged them to work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. In other words, Paul wanted these Christian slaves to understand

their identity in Christ and the opportunity they had to impact their masters for the Lord.

But to do this, the slave had to demonstrate a good work ethic consistently whether master was present or not. Today many people work in jobs they loathe. The conditions are less than pleasant. Supervisors have unrealistic expectations. Employees are hired for one job and given certain responsibilities. But soon they are asked to do much more

for the same pay. Sometimes those you work with are difficult and moody. When you are in that kind of environment it's easy to begin

thinking that you are overworked and underpaid and thus be tempted to slack off, come in late, leave early, quit, whine, or demand a pay raise.

Yet, it's important to remember you work for God. Because of who you are in Christ you need to be Christ to those around you. In Colossians 3:23 Paul puts it this way: "Whatever you do, do

it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people." Wow, isn't that amazing? Everything we do while on the job can be done in the power of the Lord and for his glory.

If you were able to switch positions with your supervisor this week, would you be the kind of employee you would hire? Do you show enthusiasm for your work? Are you kind to your coworkers? Are you on time and in a good frame of mind when you arrive? Are you an asset to your employer? Do you foster unity among coworkers and management?

Paul continues with his instructions in Colossians 4, but now shifts his attention from slave to master or in our context from employee to employer. He charges those in charge to treat those under their charge justly and fairly. Why? Because Christian masters and bosses have someone whom they will answer to: God.

Sometimes titles, positions, and professions muddle our identity, leaving us feeling inferior if we have blue-collar jobs or superior because of our white collar ones. But God does not know us by our careers. He knows us as his children and has called us to live as such.

Burnett is pastor of Willow Pointe Church, Hattiesburg.

### Bible Studies for Life

with Jim Burnett



# Opinion: Easing church/political rules good or bad?

By Scott McConnell  
Correspondent

Faith and politics have a complicated relationship in the United States. Many Americans want religious leaders to be clear about their values and how those values impact every aspect of life, including politics. They also want churches to be free to practice their faith, which includes discussing politics without any government intervention.



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However, few want their preacher's advice on which candidate for which to vote.

All three come into play when thinking about the Johnson Amendment, a 1954 law that bans certain nonprofits — including churches — from taking part in political campaigns. This includes a ban on endorsing candidates.

The executive order signed by U.S. President Donald Trump on May 4 aims to ease this restriction, yet survey research suggests that responses to the order may be mixed.

A recent survey by LifeWay Research found a majority of Americans oppose penalizing churches with a loss of their tax exemption if they endorse a candidate. Nearly eight in

Among Americans

Churches who publicly endorse political candidates should lose their tax exemption



10 Protestant senior pastors do not want the government regulating sermons and punishing churches for political content in their sermons.

Still, research consistently shows most Americans do not want pastors to endorse candidates in a church service. This includes evangelicals, as only 25% say pulpit endorsements are appropriate.

In other words, most Americans don't want pastors to

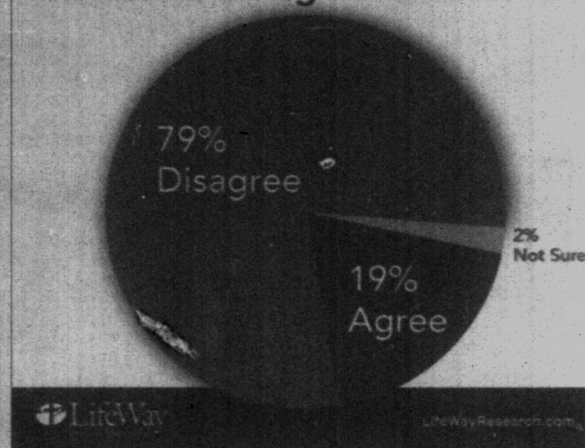
endorse candidates, but they don't want the government to punish churches if a pastor crosses that line.

There is a difference between believing something isn't prudent and saying it should be illegal. The Johnson Amendment set a penalty for political activity by churches that appears out of line with what Americans believe is appropriate.

Despite President Trump's executive order, however, it's

Among Americans

It is appropriate for pastors to publicly endorse political candidates during a church service



unlikely many pastors will begin endorsing candidates.

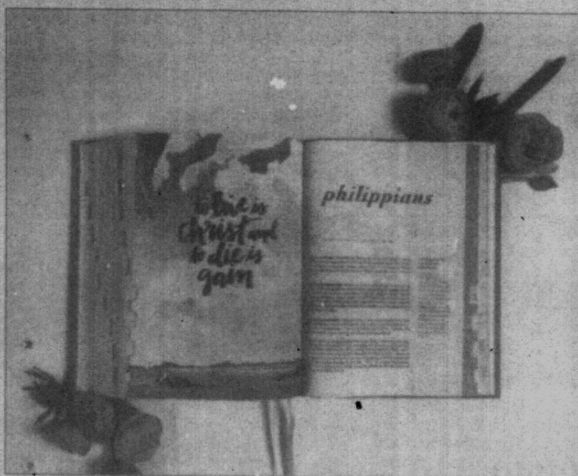
In 2012, LifeWay Research found only 10% of Protestant pastors agreed that pastors should endorse candidates for public office from the pulpit. In 2016, we found only one percent of Protestant pastors who said they had endorsed a candidate during a church service.

The rallying point for Christian churches is a common

faith in Jesus Christ — not politics. That unchanging faith leaves room for differing opinions on how society's problems, challenges, and opportunities are addressed.

McConnell is executive director of LifeWay Research, a division of LifeWay Christian Resources in Nashville. His commentary appears courtesy of Baptist Press. Edited for style and clarity.

## 'She Reads Truth' Bible sales set record at LifeWay



"This Bible is our humble attempt to honor the inherently beautiful Gospel with the aesthetic beauty it deserves. Scripture is a glorious collision of beauty, goodness and truth. We pray this Bible will represent that."

Amanda Bible Williams

She Reads Truth chief content officer

NASHVILLE (BP) — A boom in Bible sales wasn't in the projections, but the She Reads Truth Bible was a key factor in lifting the B&H Publishing Group to more Bible sales in three weeks than it was expected to sell in four months.

The new release set a record for most Bibles purchased during a pre-sale effort, reported Trevin Wax, Bible and reference publisher at LifeWay Christian Resources which owns B&H Publishing.

"The She Reads Truth community has been waiting for a Bible like this one," Wax said, "and their enthusiastic support has blown away our expectations."

She Reads Truth began in 2012 with a handful of women reading the Bible together online and using the hashtag, #SheReadsTruth. More women began to join the conversation. Nearly five years later, one million-plus women interact with God's Word through the SheReadsTruth.com website and related smartphone app.



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The initiative also has spawned an online men's version and app, He Reads Truth.

For Raechel Myers, co-founder and CEO of She Reads Truth, the new Bible is an extension of the mission to see women in the Word of God every day.

"Our hope is that this Bible will help women grow in their affection for God and His Word," Myers said. "We are excited about the enthusiastic reception of this resource and pray simply that this will not be a Bible for your shelf. It is a Bible for your life."

A consistent feature of She Reads Truth is a commitment to aesthetics. Amanda Bible Williams, chief content officer of She Reads Truth, said she and Myers wanted to include that in the study Bible as well.

"This Bible is our humble attempt to honor the inherently beautiful Gospel with the aesthetic beauty it deserves," she said. "Scripture is a glorious collision of beauty, goodness and truth. We pray this Bible will represent that."

Part of that attempt includes 66 key verses, one for each book of the Bible, illustrated and hand-lettered by 15 different artists. Before each book, the She Reads Truth Bible also includes reading plans as well as maps, charts and timelines to help place the book within its historical, cultural and geographic context.

As part of the pre-release campaign, SheReadsTruthBible.com has welcomed more than 50,000 unique visitors in the last three weeks. The website includes a video overview of the new Bible and eight other videos that explore aspects of publishing the She Reads Truth Bible.

Those videos have been viewed more than 40,000 times.

The She Reads Truth Bible is one of the first published in the new Christian Standard Bible (CSB) translation, a new revision of the Holman Christian Standard Bible from LifeWay Christian Resources. Wax said the CSB seeks to balance linguistic precision to the original languages and readability in contemporary English.